



Transportation
Research and
Improvement
Project

August 16, 2019

Dear Ms. Bhuiyan,

We are writing to you on behalf of the Chinatown Transportation Research and Improvement Project (Chinatown TRIP) to share our feedback on your article titled, "Scooter start-up promised to serve a whole city. Then it cut out two poor areas." Chinatown TRIP is a community volunteer organization with the mission to improve transportation and pedestrian safety in Chinatown through research and planning, bringing improvements to transit service, traffic circulation, quality of life, and pedestrian safety. We have a history of over 40 years of transportation advocacy in the primarily low-income and senior-heavy neighborhood of Chinatown and can provide some more context on why Chinatown is shown as a no parking zone in the Scoot network.

As noted in your article, Scoot was one of two companies awarded a permit in SFMTA's pilot program for dockless scooters on August 30, 2018. After these permits were awarded, Chinatown TRIP had the pleasure of meeting the community outreach teams of both companies, Skip and Scoot, during that Fall. The purpose of these meetings was to voice our community's concerns about how this new form of mobility would affect our community, particularly our low-income and elderly population. The following issues were flagged by Chinatown TRIP as reasons why Chinatown is an unsuitable neighborhood for parking scooters:

- **Narrow and Crowded Sidewalks:** Chinatown has a very old and outdated sidewalk infrastructure dating from its reconstruction after the 1906 earthquake. In most areas of Chinatown, the sidewalks are not even wide enough to comply with ADA-standard 6 feet clearances. Between alleys, the crowded shopping corridor of Stockton Street, and the throngs of tourists on Grant Avenue, there simply is not enough space to park a scooter. This is a concern particularly on Stockton Street, where many a multitude of grocery stores have vegetable stands along the sidewalk. As such, the presence of parked scooters impedes the flow of pedestrian traffic on an already-crowded space.
- **Elderly and Disabled Population:** According to the 2009-2013 American Community Survey US Census data, the median age of Chinatown residents is 50.4 years (compared to 35 years citywide), with 35% of residents over age 60 (compared to 20% citywide). Additionally, Chinatown sees a large number of seniors and people with disabilities commuting into the neighborhood on a daily basis from other parts of San Francisco, as evidenced by the 2018 Muni Service Equity Strategy Report showing that several Chinatown bus routes (8, 8AX, 8BX, 30) are among the routes most heavily used by seniors and people with disabilities (Table 15). The presence of scooters parked on already-crowded sidewalks creates yet another tripping hazard for seniors who are mobility and/or vision impaired, especially scooters that are improperly parked.
- **High Pedestrian Volumes:** According to the 2009-2013 American Community Survey US Census data, walking is the primary transportation mode in Chinatown (41.4% in Chinatown vs. 10.1%

citywide). As referenced in previous bullet points, these high pedestrian volumes create a lot of sidewalk congestion, which leaves no room for scooter parking. With four streets in our neighborhood identified as Vision Zero High-Injury Corridors (Broadway, Columbus, Kearny, and Stockton), pedestrian safety is a huge concern for our community. Therefore, we cannot support any initiatives that impede the flow of pedestrian traffic or create further hazards to pedestrians in an already-challenging environment.

Due to Chinatown TRIP's safety concerns listed above, we conveyed to both Scoot and Skip that the community would like a no-parking zone to be established in Chinatown. The map you show in your article is reflective of the intentions of the community. We were pleased to see Scoot cooperate with the wishes of our community, but unfortunately, Skip has not followed suit with our request. Chinatown TRIP also lodged a similar request with Jump Bikes (now a part of Uber), in April 2019 to establish a no-parking zone with similar boundaries due to similar challenges posed by their larger dockless bikes. Unfortunately, Jump to date has not granted our request.

Indeed, the statement made by the Scoot spokesperson quoted in your article holds true, "Scoot works closely with the SFMTA to ensure we are meeting the needs of the community," since Scoot is the only company to date that took our community feedback seriously and followed through with their promise to consider the unique needs of every community. Therefore, Chinatown TRIP takes exception to your article's characterization of Scoot as not serving the needs of the Chinatown neighborhood. We hope that any future articles written on this issue accurately reflect these facts and show that neighborhood context is a powerful tool to assessing the success or failure of any mode of transportation.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Jon Hee', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Jon Hee, Co-Chair, Chinatown TRIP

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Queenena Chen', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Queenena Chen, Co-Chair, Chinatown TRIP